

AMERICAN SCHOOLS OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH

JERUSALEM AND BAGHDAD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWSLETTER

Confidential

Not for publication

Newsletter #1.

1949-50

New Haven, Oct. 26, 49.

The long interval that has developed between Newsletters may have created the impression that the life of the American Schools has been at a standstill. The very opposite has actually been the case. So much has been happening that the Directors and the Administrative Officers have scarcely been able to keep abreast of each day's developments, let alone report upon them as they should. This communication, presented with due apologies, is intended to make up in part for the deficiencies.

Staff. During the summer the affairs of the Jerusalem School were administered for us by Prof. A. Henry Detweiler of Cornell University in his capacity as Acting Director. He arrived at Jerusalem on June 28 and left again on August 29, his arrival preceding the departure of Prof. and Mrs. Sellers and his departure following the arrival of Prof. and Mrs. Kenneth Clark of Duke University. During the whole period, therefore, the Jerusalem School was never without a guiding head, a matter of no small importance under present conditions.

Since August 17 Prof. Clark has been in command at Jerusalem, serving both as Acting Director and as Annual Professor. Meanwhile, on October 18, Prof. and Mrs. James L. Kelso of the Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary sailed for the Near East, where they are due to arrive early in November. Prof. Kelso will take up Prof. Sellers' duties as Director at Jerusalem upon his arrival.

On October 19, Dr. Francis R. Steele of the University of Pennsylvania Museum left for Iraq, where he will participate in the joint excavations conducted by the Pennsylvania Museum and the Oriental Institute at Nippur, and where concurrently he will represent us as Annual Professor of the Baghdad School for the year 1949-50.

One student, Mr. Howard C. Kee, Two Brothers Fellow of Yale University, has already arrived at Jerusalem to participate in the work of the School. Other students are expected even though no fellowships were awarded by the Schools for the current academic year.

Archaeological Activities

During the summer Prof. Detweiler made for the Jerusalem School an archaeological reconnaissance and survey of the site of ancient Madaba in the modern Kingdom of Jordan. He will give a full account of his findings at the December meetings. There is real promise of significant finds from Byzantine and late Roman times especially in

the southern part of the ancient city. Superimposed layers of mosaic pavements in particular promise to make important contributions to our knowledge of decorative and pictorial art in the region and to ~~throw~~ throw new light upon such well-known monuments as the Madaba Map and the mosaics of Jerash. Air-photographs made especially for Prof. Detweiler by the Air Force of the Kingdom of Jordan should give a clearer idea of the plan of the Byzantine city. The fact that much building is now going on about the site to house refugees suggests that the opportunities should be seized quickly, before the remains are made inaccessible.

Archaeological News

From Jerusalem Prof. Clark has reported under the date of September 22 the discovery of a Roman columbarium. His report reads as follows:

A few days ago Musa Bey reported that workmen repairing the road to Bethany had broken open a columbarium. Immediately I took Dr. Baranki with me to see what was taking place. The opening revealed the honeycomb ante-room where hundreds of lamps had been set, - but no lamps. It was a pagan burial crypt perhaps of the first century B.C. We reported it to DeJani, Harding's local agent, who had the authority to stop further depredations.

On August 25 newspapers here carried reports of the excavation by Prof. E.L. Sukenik of a Samaritan synagogue at el-Bārriya, between Latrun and Ramleh. Letters from Prof. Sukenik indicate that the mosaic floor contains a medallion with a representation of Mount Gerizim, adding another item to the iconographic repertoire of ancient Jewish and related art.

School Building and its Occupants.

During the difficult times of the past academic year the School building and the grounds at Jerusalem suffered not a little incidental damage from stray shots, a bomb explosion and the coming and going of UN convoys and observers. The work of repair and restoration begun by Prof. and Mrs. Sellers has been continued by Profs. Detweiler and Clark. The gates can again be locked, the garden is in order, windows and shutters have been repaired, the structure of the building has been examined and found unaffected by the bomb explosion, the services have been investigated and improved, furniture has been repaired and redecoration of the rooms has been undertaken where possible. There is as yet no electric current for light, heating and refrigeration, but steps are being taken to provide for at least the last two in the not too distant future.

In the course of the past winter the School provided domicile for native families of the neighborhood left suddenly without shelter. The service was one the

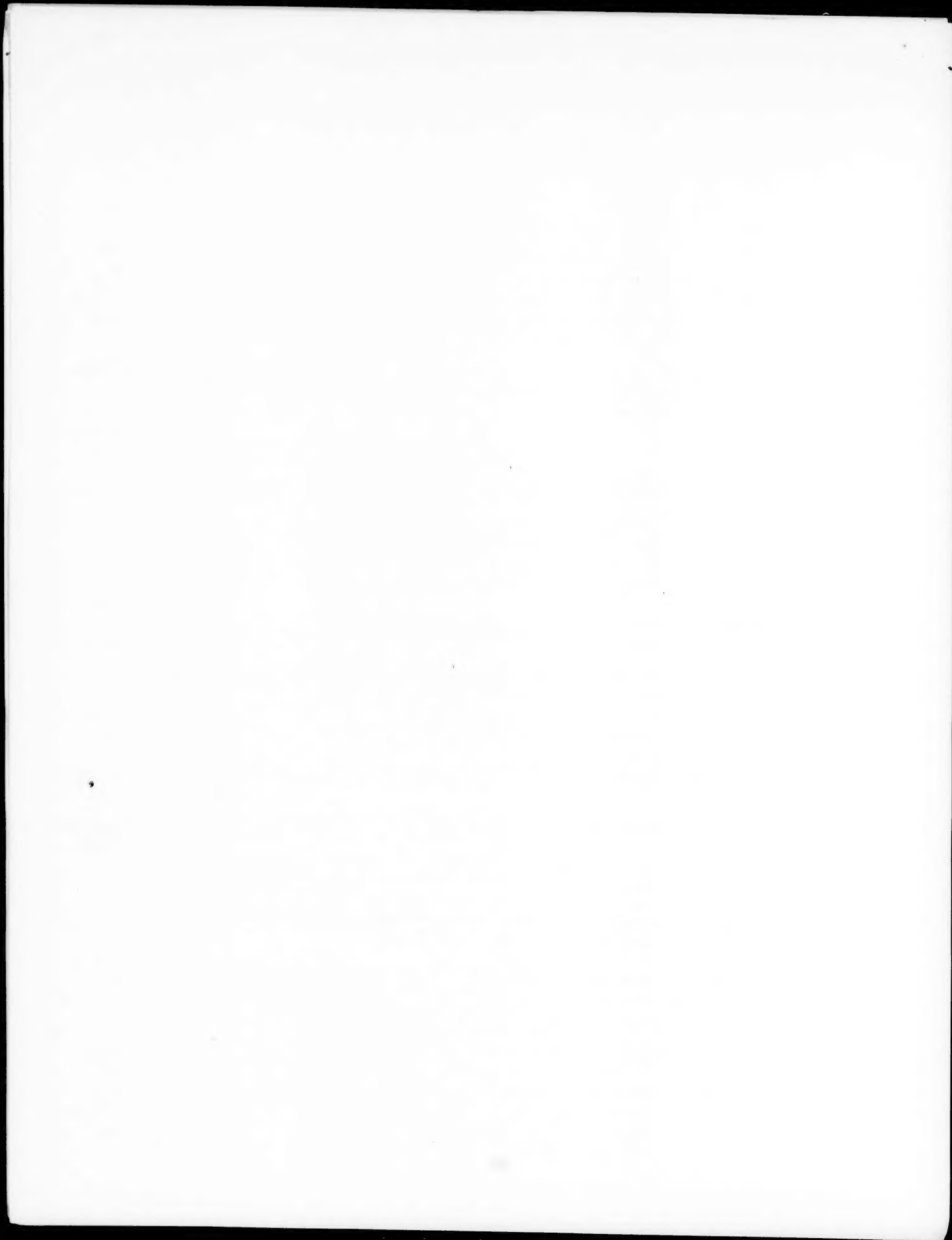
were happy to perform in an emergency. It had this complication that the Jerusalem municipality ultimately felt obliged to levy upon the Schools certain taxes of the type collected from hotels and hostels. Our Acting Directors have been persistent in their protests against such levies, which, once admitted, would deny the status of the School as an educational institution. As yet the end is not in sight, but to disembarass our representatives in the negotiations it has been found necessary to inform our native guests that their residence at the School is necessarily temporary and that they must find other quarters as soon as possible. Some have in the meantime moved to the new hotel that has been opened farther along the street. The rooms thus vacated are being redecorated and will soon be needed for our own purposes.

In late August an agreement was signed by the Schools with the State Department by virtue of which the two rooms on either side of the main entrance corridor were rented to the Department to house a branch office of the Consulate. We are happy to be of assistance to our Government in this connection and to help establish consular services on the eastern side of the "wall of partition" at Jerusalem.

Administrative
Personnel at
Jerusalem. The
Library.

The return to normal academic life at the Jerusalem School made it impossible for Miss Basimah Faris, who had served us so well during the previous winter, to cope with the full range of the demands for time, secretarial assistance, library supervision, book-keeping and house-keeping traditionally met by one person, for many years by Mrs. Pommerantz. Miss Faris has now been succeeded by Miss A.G. Halaby, who had been recommended to us by Prof. Sellers and who had previously worked for the UN Commission. Miss Halaby is now giving full time to the secretarial, financial and house-keeping end of the School's work. A change in the Jerusalem School's fiscal year, an audit which clarified the financial picture and a new system of book-keeping made to gear in with that of the Provident Trust Co. and of the budget, will help to keep us better informed of the financial needs and expenditures of the School.

During the summer Prof. Dotweiler was able to secure the services also of Mr. D.C. Baranki, formerly of the Archaeological Museum staff, for his work at Madaba. Mr. Baranki has stayed on and has been of great assistance in analyzing the situation in our library and helping Prof. Clark prepare the way for a microfilming operation (see below) at the Greek Patriarchate. From Mr. Baranki we now have a full list of the incomplete periodical files in the library and information about binding and catalogue needs.



With Prof. Kelso there have been sent to the School at Jerusalem a steel filing cabinet (23 drawers) for the card catalogue of the Library, all the back numbers of periodicals stored here pending the return of more settled conditions, two large cases of books representing the Grape library (a bequest received during the past year from which Prof. Albright selected the books that were important), a new typewriter and a liberal supply of library materials (cards and guide cards). We hope to be able to fill in missing issues of periodicals and to bring our holdings up to date.

Field Trips and School work.

Prof. Clark writes that the School has already entered upon its regular program of work. In this connection he says in a letter of Oct. 2,

On Thursday, September 29, we took our first school field trip, going to Bethlehem, Beth-Zur and Hebron. To-morrow, Oct. 3, we shall go on a short trip northward to Tell el-Ful, Tell en-Nasbeh and possibly also to Nebi Samuel. On Tuesday Baramki will begin a series of lectures on pottery, each of which will be followed up the next day by a trip to the Archaeological Museum to study the forms. The plan is to do this each week for a series of weeks. To-morrow, Oct. 3, I shall start the course on Textual Criticism, meeting three times a week. By this means I hope to have Mr. Kee sufficiently advanced so that he can help with the micro-filming project.

Microfilming Project.

Your President has been negotiating for some time with the Library of Congress for the microfilming of a large number of manuscripts in the patriarchal libraries at Jerusalem. The operation is of great importance for the work on the Apparatus Criticus of the Greek New Testament now being undertaken on an international basis, with an executive center at Chicago, as well as for the study of Christian manuscript illustration that is being pursued particularly at Princeton University and at Dumbarton Oaks. The arrangements under consideration are that the Library of Congress will supply the photographer, the cameras and the films, and the Schools the services of Prof. Clark and the administration of the venture in the Near East. Permission from the Greek Patriarch has been obtained, and the materials necessary for our end of the undertaking, especially a motor-driven generator to supply electric current for the intricate photographic apparatus, have been sent to Jerusalem with Prof. Kelso. There will doubtless be a release on the subject once the agreement has been signed and the support of the venture is assured. At present we are still in the negotiations phase. After the